

## **THE JOY OF DISCOVERY: WHY MEDICAL COLLEGES MUST ENCOURAGE STUDENT RESEARCH**

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Research lies at the heart of medical education. It is not an optional pursuit but the very spirit of inquiry that transforms information into knowledge and knowledge into discovery. The joy of research is not confined to large, well-funded laboratories; it begins with curiosity, a well-formed question, and the courage to seek answers. For medical students, even modest project, a case report, a clinical audit, or a literature review can provide the first spark of discovery and a sense of contribution to the wider body of medicine. Medical colleges bear a responsibility far greater than the transmission of facts. As Iqbal reminded us, education must nurture 'the spirit of inquiry and the search for truth'.<sup>1</sup> Without fostering research, our institutions risk producing technicians rather than thinkers. The father of nation emphasized that the youth of Pakistan must build character and knowledge in service of the nation.<sup>2</sup> Encouraging student research is thus both an academic and moral imperative. It elevates the reputation of colleges, enhances clinical outcomes<sup>3</sup>, and most importantly, aligns education with the real health needs of our communities.<sup>4</sup> For students, research is transformative. It sharpens critical thinking, problem-solving, and resilience while offering a competitive edge in postgraduate training and global opportunities.<sup>5</sup> More profoundly, it instills the joy of contribution. In countries like Pakistan, where disease

burdens and healthcare realities differ from the West, generating local evidence is crucial.<sup>6</sup> Without it, we remain consumers of global science; with it, we become producers and policy shapers. The call, therefore, is clear. Our medical colleges must integrate research as a core mission, and our students must embrace it as part of their professional identity. In doing so, we honor the vision of Iqbal and Jinnah, and ensure that medical education becomes not just a path to practice, but a gateway to discovery.

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